GOOD JUDGMENT IS NOTHING MORE THAN compliance



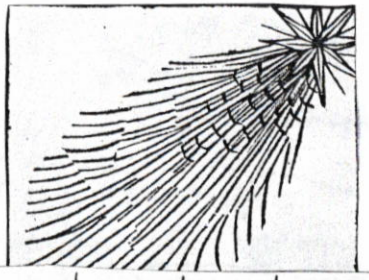
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63130

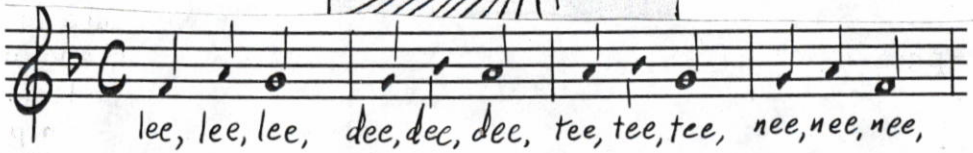


transmogrify

Selected writings by jamie smith

504



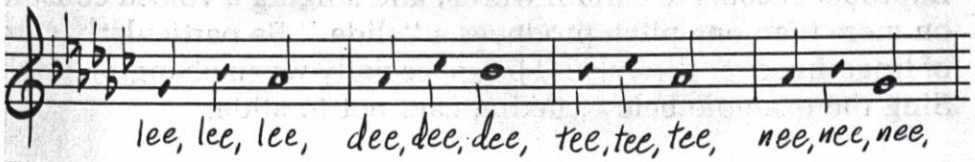


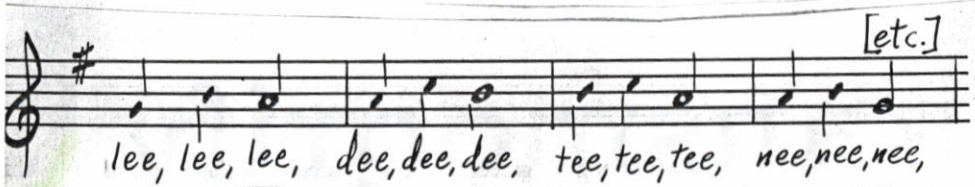
All original written works contained.
Yet...
who knows where the visual images came from.

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The poem titled
"The Next Morning She Bought Me Pancakes"
was published in Currents Literary Magazine
Volume 36, Spring 2001





Be careful not to

IMPORTANT: INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR MEDICATION

RX # 6138301
JAMIE SMITH
SULFATRIM D/S

..TAKE WITH WATER
..AVOID OVEREXPOSURE TO SUN
..DISCARD UNUSED PORTION

IMPORTANT: INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR MEDICATION

Departure.
Date:
August 24, 2001
Confessions of an anti-globalization anarchist activist exploring Ghana.

Sounds like a decent book title, huh?
The passport arrived in the mail today, and suddenly I know deep down that this will change everything. I now just need to get the visa in order and in two months I am set to leave...Africa.

An old friend called me yesterday, she told me she was proud. Very few people actually get to experience a dream. I taped this quote on the door today. "I want to run nude through Africa before there ain't no Africa left."
I want to... the list runs on and on for when i'm gonna be gone.

Somehow I don't think I'll be gone,
I think I'll be found.
Shots begin soon, yellow fever, rabies, typhoid...
I honestly don't know if I will want to return, except for possible the selfishness involving personal comfort.
I don't feel any particular concern for this nation anymore.
Yet maybe I just need to see it though different eyes...

IMPORTANT: INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR MEDICATION

RX # 6138303
JAMIE SMITH
ENGERIX-B 20MCG/ML SYRING

..FOR FREE COUNSELING ON
..YOUR PRESCRIPTIONS CALL
..US AT 768-8870 ANY TIME

Clothing
__ 1 pair walking shoe
__ 1 pair sandal
__ 1 pair boots
__ 12 pairs white ankle socks
__ 8 pair undies
__ 2 pairs of shorts
__ 3 pairs of pants
__ 2 skirts
__ 1 light dress
__ 5 shirts
__ 1 sweater
__ 1 rain jacket
__ 1 bathing suit
__ 3 bandannas

• Do some research before leaving home. A large array of books, available in travel bookstores and university libraries, explain cultural customs across the globe. Read the introductory sections of guidebooks, and keep notes on suggestions for how to dress, greet people and act in religious temples and shrines.

Medicine&Toiletries
__ prescriptions
__ toothbrush and toothpaste
__ soap and shampoo
__ sunscreen
__ condoms
__ toliet paper
__ tampons- 4 months worth
__ disposable razors



CLOTHING
- ❑ 1 pair of wal
- ❑ 1 pair of flip
- ❑ 2-4 pairs of
- ❑ 4 pairs of underwear x2
- ❑ 1-2 pairs of shorts
- ❑ 1-2 skirts/trousers
- ❑ 3 shirts x2
- ❑ 1 sweater/sweats
- ❑ 1 poncho/rain jack
- ❑ 1 light jacket
- ❑ 1 bathing suit
- ❑ ~~1 hat~~ 3 bando
- ❑ 1 semi-nice outfit

MEDICINE AND TO
- ❑ Prescription medic prescriptions
- ❑ Toothbrush and toc
- ❑ Soap and shampoo
- ❑ Comb and/or brush
- ❑ Sunscreen, moisturizers, ~~cosmetics~~
- ❑ ~~Deodorant~~ hair gel
- ❑ First-aid kit
- ❑ Contraceptives/condoms
- ❑ Aspirin or other pain reliever
- ❑ ~~Tissues~~ toliet paper
- ❑ Tampons x4 months
- ❑ Disposable razors
- ❑ Eyeglasses, sunglasses, contact lenses and cleaning solution

DOCUMENTS, ETC.
- ❑ Passport (and visa if required)
- ❑ Documents
- ❑ student id card
- ❑ money belt
- ❑ cash, travelers checks
- ❑ insurance card
- ❑ phone card

Stuff
__ camera
__ swiss army knife
__ travel journal
__ address book
__ books, guides, maps, compass
__ laundry soap and line
__ flat drain plug
__ sewing kit
__ plastic baggies, safety pins
__ glue stick
__ colored pencils

I'm going to affect the one-millionth of one percent of the people that I can.

Contents:

Dedication

1. Biding Time.
2. I Want Revolution Like A Lover.
3. Third Presidential Debate Met With Protesters
4. She Went By Roach.
5. On DC- Wow There Is a Lot of State to Smash Here.

6. Farther From the Packaged Sun
7. Stairs Crammed Between Two Flights
8. The Next Morning She Bought Me Pancakes
9. Moms That Smoke Produce Felons
10. Running Joke
11. Joy Like

12. I Was Born a Female
13. Packing List
[redacted]

Departure

My dedication.

The porch that we were sitting on allowed the cold rain to strike my back. I really didn't care. A [redacted] child sat on a broken orange plastic couch that slanted to the left.

"Hey kid, so how old are you?" My guess was seven, he was skinny and about 4'4'. He swore that he was 5 ft. I was quickly informed that he was ten years old, and named Issac.

He proceeded to converse and when Jason, crouching in front of him didn't seem to be paying attention, Issac reached forward and quickly slapped him across the face.

"Can we take him home?" I laughingly asked.

Issac. Who complimented the 'anarchy-power-feminism' tattoo which graces my right outside calf. "I have spray painted that sign before," he said with pride.

He went on to tell me all that he knew about Mumia (Abu-Jamal). About the way things are in the world. About the injustices, and how he donated an entire bag of his toys to a garage sale to raise funds for the defense.

He told me that he didn't think that they would actually go through with the execution.

He told me that he really didn't have any friends.

Oh, Issac. Where does it go from here? To just another generation; another letter, named by Newsweek. Another decade spinning down the drain.

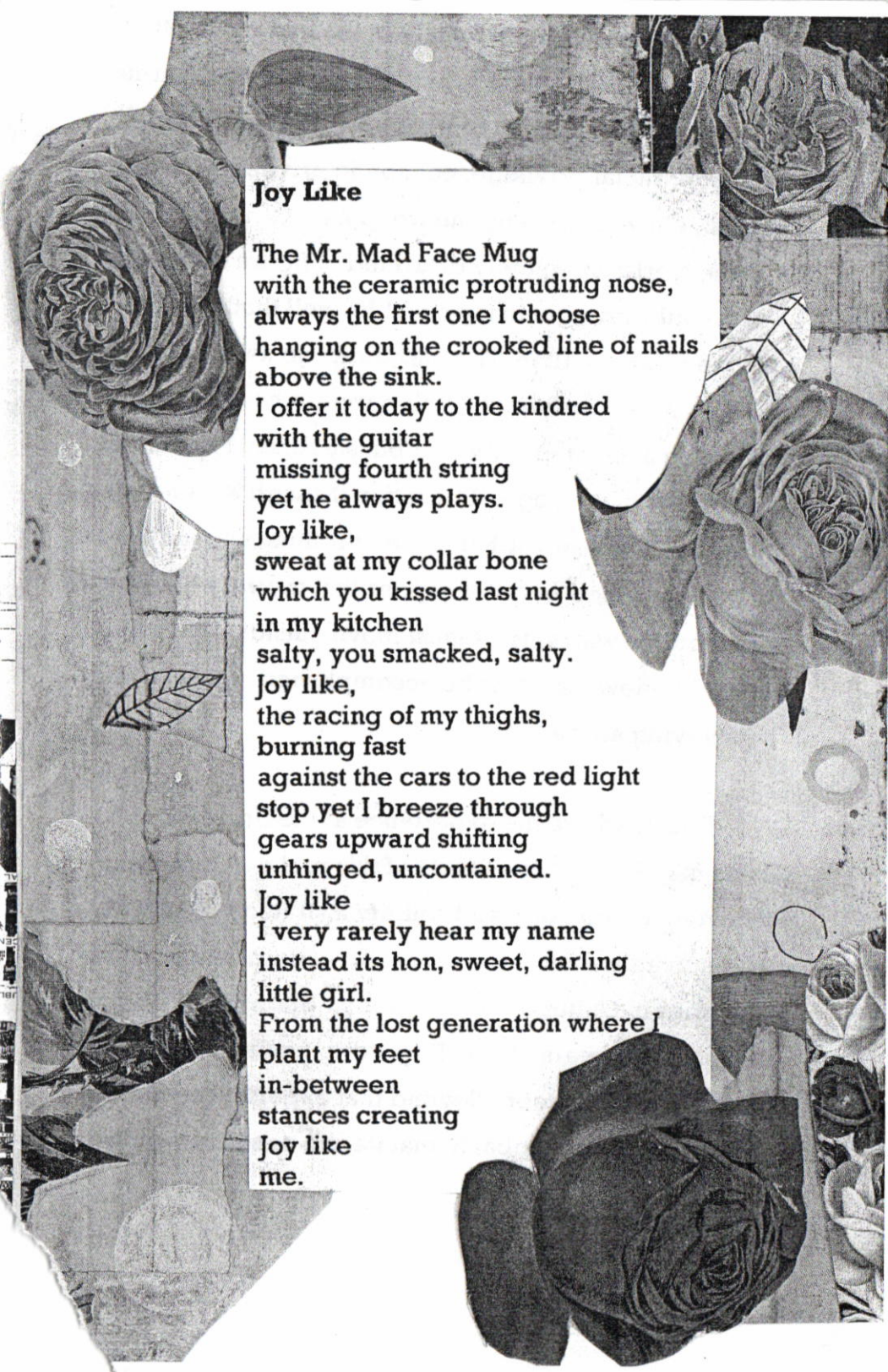
Oh, Issac.

You have more friends then you will ever even know.

by the day. For the weapons of this country and its power is effecting the globe on an unprecedented scale. I will utilize my experiences studying abroad to join a world community. Creating a stable footing for a personal commitment to ensure freedom for my generation and those beyond my own time. Striving to create a global community that embraces true pacification, without wars, torture, genocide and without weapons of privilege. I believe that my studies in Anthropology give me the greatest insight for this pursuit which will be greatly enhanced by an experience at the college level abroad. I truly believe in the words of Dr. Margaret Mead, "Anthropological field work with living peoples in small, bounded communities is a vital preparation for participation in the planning and development of new planet- wide institutions" (Mead, Margaret. Letters From the Field. Harper and Row. New York. 1977.).

I was born a white female in the mid twentieth century industrial America. I came into this world armed to the teeth with an arsenal of weapons. The weapons of privilege; racial privilege, economic privilege. To be a pacifist, I have to give up the weapons of privilege and go into the world completely disarmed. I figure if there is a worth while struggle in my own life, well that's probable the one (Phillips, Utah. The past didn't go anywhere. 1996). Thus far my commitment to this struggle has been through education and actions, limited but steadfast. I know that it is time to turn the page. Education through words can only go so far. Activism for human, environmental, and labor rights, is trapped by the weapons that my very life way as an American warrants. I must move outside of privilege, which I believe can best be accomplished at this juncture by studying abroad.

That is where the experience at the University of Ghana fits. A first step outside of this realm. A chance to reflect on the privilege and solidify a strategy of actions. I commit to utilize this experience educationally to continue my studies in Cultural Anthropology. Upon graduation, I anticipate two years of grueling work, again in Africa, as a Peace Corps volunteer. Beyond that experience, choices are unlimited and global humanitarian needs are growing



Joy Like

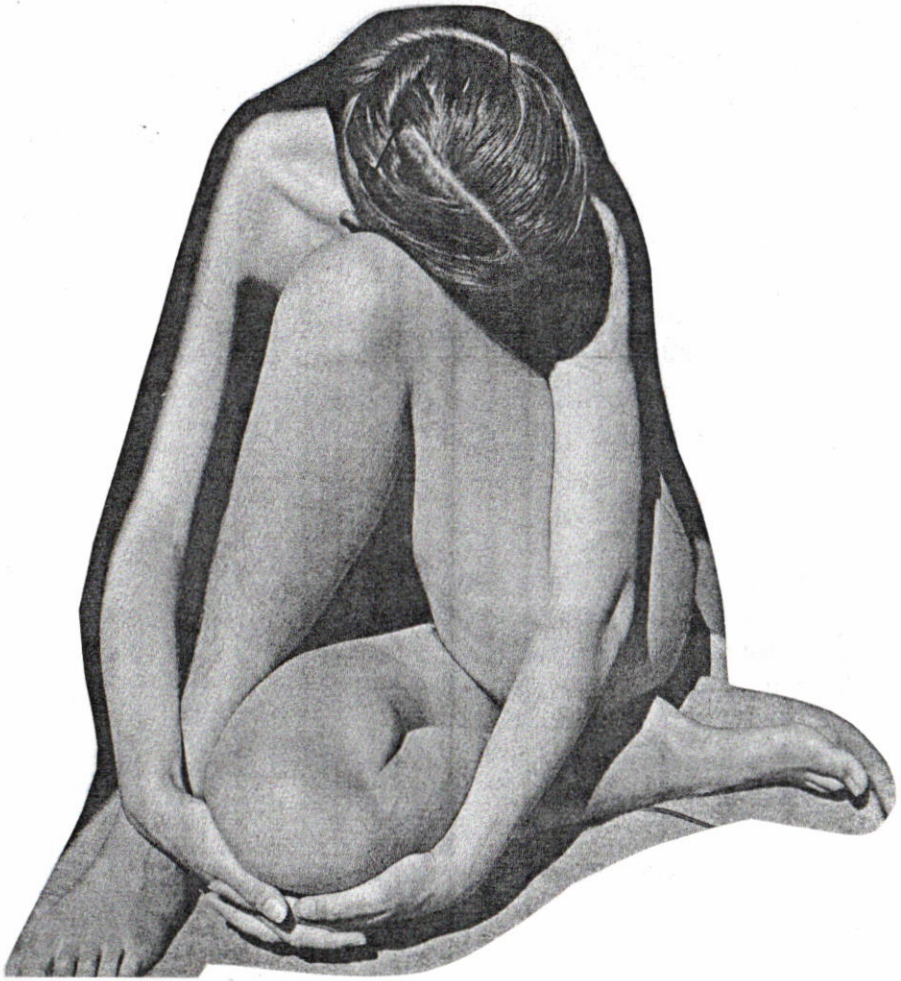
The Mr. Mad Face Mug
with the ceramic protruding nose,
always the first one I choose
hanging on the crooked line of nails
above the sink.
I offer it today to the kindred
with the guitar
missing fourth string
yet he always plays.
Joy like,
sweat at my collar bone
which you kissed last night
in my kitchen
salty, you smacked, salty.
Joy like,
the racing of my thighs,
burning fast
against the cars to the red light
stop yet I breeze through
gears upward shifting
unhinged, uncontained.
Joy like
I very rarely hear my name
instead its hon, sweet, darling
little girl.
From the lost generation where I
plant my feet
in-between
stances creating
Joy like
me.

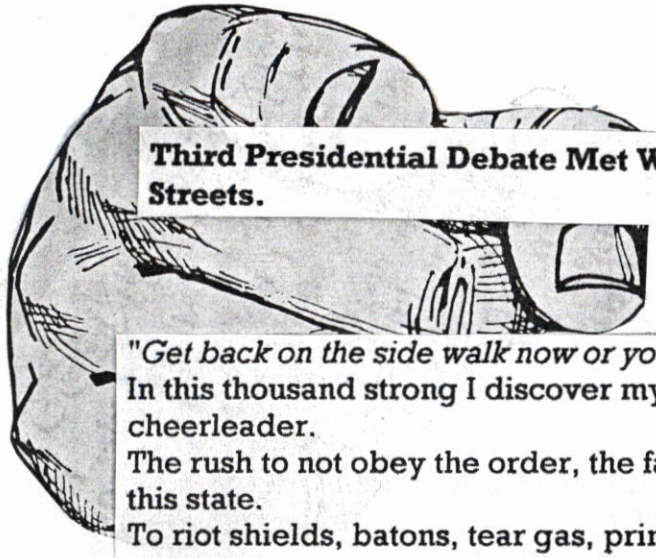
She expects
the let down
which is me.

"No," I whisper, *"I am staying with Carrie."*
She spits at me.

"Its her perky tits, right?" She laughs.
"My tits are perkier,"
half-laughs.

I cry.





Third Presidential Debate Met With Protesters in the Streets.

"Get back on the side walk now or you will be arrested!"
In this thousand strong I discover my inner anarchist cheerleader.
The rush to not obey the order, the face of the weapon of this state.
To riot shields, batons, tear gas, primed and ready to destroy the ideals;
there might be a better way.
My Cheerleader she chants:
"Whose streets? Our streets."

"May I ask you a few questions, like how do you feel right now?"
I am going blind.
It is leaking down my nose, infiltrating my tear ducts; mace.
I lean over to throw up.
"It burns," I scream. She pulls me back from tears.
My cheerleader she states:
"This is the truth, the police state."

"Can you identify the officer, can you handle that?"
His badge number reads 556; St. Louis Country Police.
He begrudging unzips his coat, ashamed to show his name.
Cameras explode around me.
I do not shake, and address the man given weapons to protect the state.
"You need a raise."
She is in control joyfully:
"What do we want? Anarchy!"



She went by roach.

Her hips caught the attention first
the sharp fleshy points
screaming not birthing hips but bitchy...
she yelled epitaphs like,
where did all the queer anarchy chicks
seem to disappear too.
This from beyond the entire assemble of layered black,
it was really not that cold and the face mask
to disguise from the them, the her.
She went by roach,
and would not give her true name.
Which was Alicia who graded middle school test papers
for money.
Even in middle of the mid usa buried in america's
conservative bulbous fat layer
she knew to cover her face
and what a 'Seattle facial' really means.
She whispered her most pressing knowledge,
don't throw back the tear gas canisters.
We can cover it with the drums.
Where are the cracks from which they came, hidden not
just behind black face masks
but the counter top of the diner down the street.
She went by roach.

Running Joke

My answering machine salivates.
"Jamie, pick up, it's muy importante."
She is like my Tyler Durden.
Birthing this cluster fuck of me.

"Hey Faye,"
I should have satiated the machine,
her voice creeps through these windows
leaking cold air.
350 miles away,
I half- laugh,
half-cry.

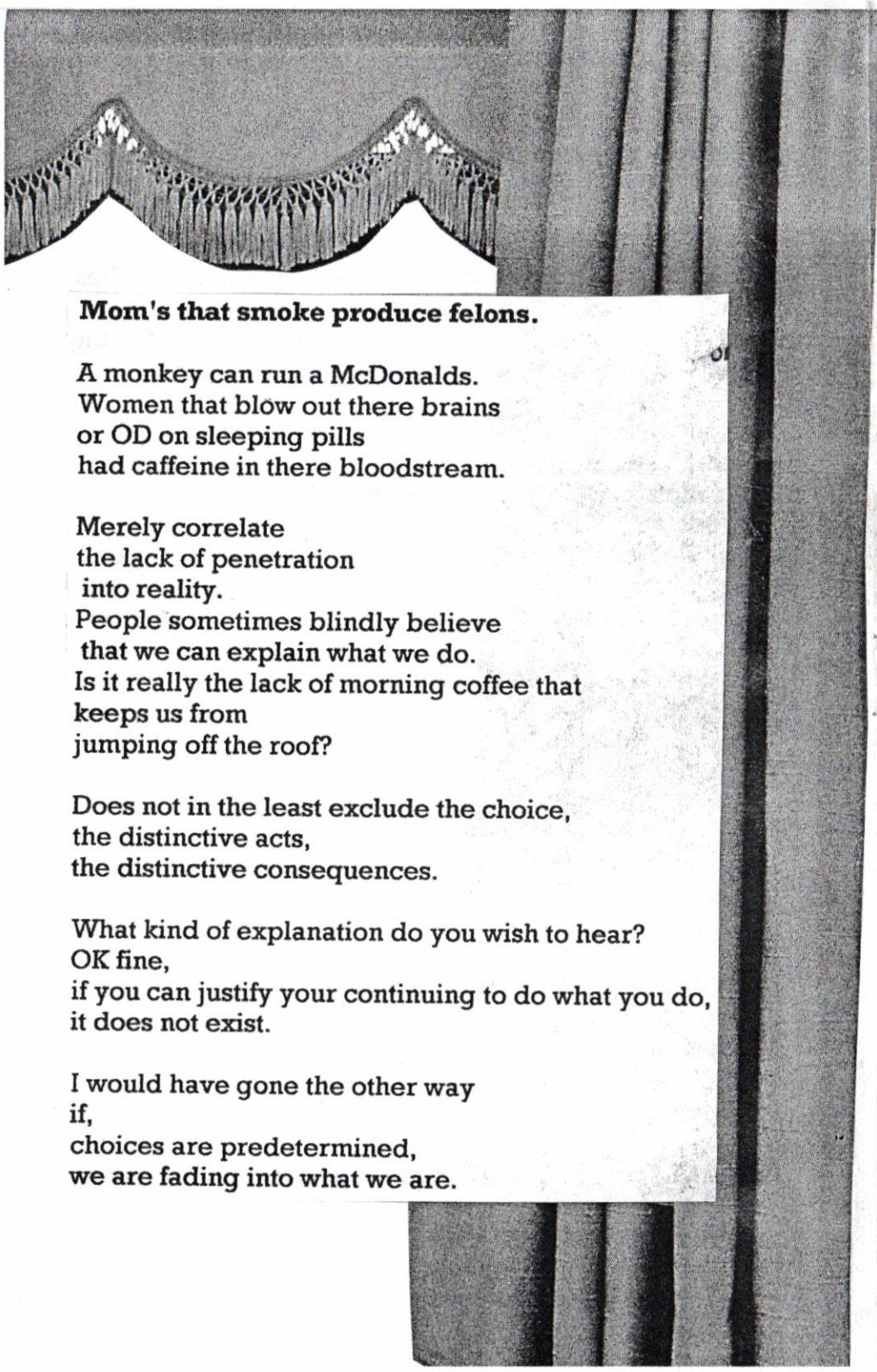
Kansas City straight out at me.
She is talking like she is trying to write some chick folk
song.
"James, your body....."
caller ID, just $7.45 a month,
"Your body, is my poetry."

Red hair flashes, spiky
piercing even in my mornings
smell her woman
masquerading through men's deodorant.
Veins pulsating through,
sneaking past,
pale freckled skin.

She is cloaking her tears now,
yet they cascade down
blank new apartment walls.
"Why, why did you have to leave?"

Geographical Relocation.
It's quite simple really.

"So when you visit, your gonna stay with me right?"



Mom's that smoke produce felons.

A monkey can run a McDonalds.
Women that blow out there brains
or OD on sleeping pills
had caffeine in there bloodstream.

Merely correlate
the lack of penetration
into reality.
People sometimes blindly believe
that we can explain what we do.
Is it really the lack of morning coffee that
keeps us from
jumping off the roof?

Does not in the least exclude the choice,
the distinctive acts,
the distinctive consequences.

What kind of explanation do you wish to hear?
OK fine,
if you can justify your continuing to do what you do,
it does not exist.

I would have gone the other way
if,
choices are predetermined,
we are fading into what we are.

"On DC- Wow, There is a lot of state to smash here."

Departure 7:20 pm Thursday Jan. 18th
20 minutes behind schedule, we almost didn't make the bus, we were just sitting and talking, My brother- Scott- and my dad, it is an interesting mix.
I am rethinking the decision to take the overnight bus trip - I am too excited to sleep. My brother doesn't know why he is going, he says that his life is just fine. I think it is more for the adventure, he says he wants to meet girls. A bus full of strangers. A beautiful small family just got on, a girl about ten she seems mature though and two small boys with just the dad. He has astonishing hair, small tight deadlocks down his back- perfect. Conversation lightly buzzes but its so dark, lonely road. 700,000 people are expected this weekend and its just the three of us- and in math your taught to round up or down based on five. We have no signs, no weapons, just us in our little group. The world seems so dark and huge and we seem so small.
9:00am January 19th
Pittsburgh, we have stopped at , Cleveland, , now we depart again to DC. Its daylight now, the area is so hilly-I am surprised at how much I slept although my tailbone feels broken and my neck like i was in a collision. We met another "protester" yet... we couldn't figure out what for. Ok not funny but well he said something about abortion. My rational side says, if he says that he's against I might tangent on that fact that he has no uterus, and no control over mine It feels so out of line, we pass by areas with exactly the same restaurants, gas stations, decaying urban areas its hard not to be pessimistic. In the dark last night through Illinois a sprawling complex appeared out of no where, It was brightly lit with that sickly yellow orange, yet surrounded by barbed wire, it was massive. I said to my dad, "Look look," he asked me, "What the hell is it?" A Prison a prison, hidden away, a sickly glow.

We are pulling into a mall parking lot. To the right through the window are three local police cars. I can't help but feel some amazement. Its just any other car. Its just any other person. The symbol not an absolute. We lock eyes and sort of laugh.

Scott's reading the Newsweek, I am so damn cynical and just want to blurt out Newspeak or something as asinine. We are just four years apart, seemingly an entire generation. He seems more concerned with money, and music- well music first but... for him Berkeley Calf, punk music, a record... for me dreams of South Africa or China human rights stuff, renouncing my citizenship...

I feel like a cockroach climbing out of the woodwork where I am always scurrying around. Just to disappear back into the normalcy of life school, work...

AFTERNOON Amish Country

He has been traveling on this route since St. Louis, clearly a youth, i.e. Around my age, his lip is pierced and his ear is stretched with this beautiful African inspired black piece, he wears a brownish sweatshirt and the hood up a lot, all he carries is a notebook and a pen. His t-shirt underneath is ratty and says Got Punk? He says that he is headed to Baltimore, I finally get him to tell me that he ran out of money three days ago, I gave him a bag of Pecan Sandies that my dad was holding and some candy and an apple juice. When he gets to his next stop I will give him money, I can't say I really know why. Maybe its something about his dark solemn eyes which remain so quiet and the ease with which he can sleep through the hum of an engine that takes us away- "That I could jump ship and swim that the ocean would hold me," I am a current inside of the sea which is really a system that crashes down all around you or me,
My ears feel as if filled with long clown balloon's and inside pushing towards the surface, the shift is gradual thought, the Rain is constant yet not striking the ground, just mist moving in every direction.
We can't figure out what the hell the time is, its gonna be cold and wet. I already feel sick.
Four seats ahead a mom and her kid debate with the guy behind them about the security at the debates, "No worse than usual." The heavy set man in a green and gray plaid disagrees, he mentions the checkpoints
Just another hour to DC.

We shot glass drank Old English, this watery piss looking beer,
on a warm sticky night so we sat outside.
Sat, rather dropped, ourselves
on the tacky damp plaid scavenged couch
in the front yard.

She was from Arkansas and said it was common, couches in the front yard that is.
It stank, but so did we, in our ripped up jeans and the big boots, which were required for the sculpture yard.

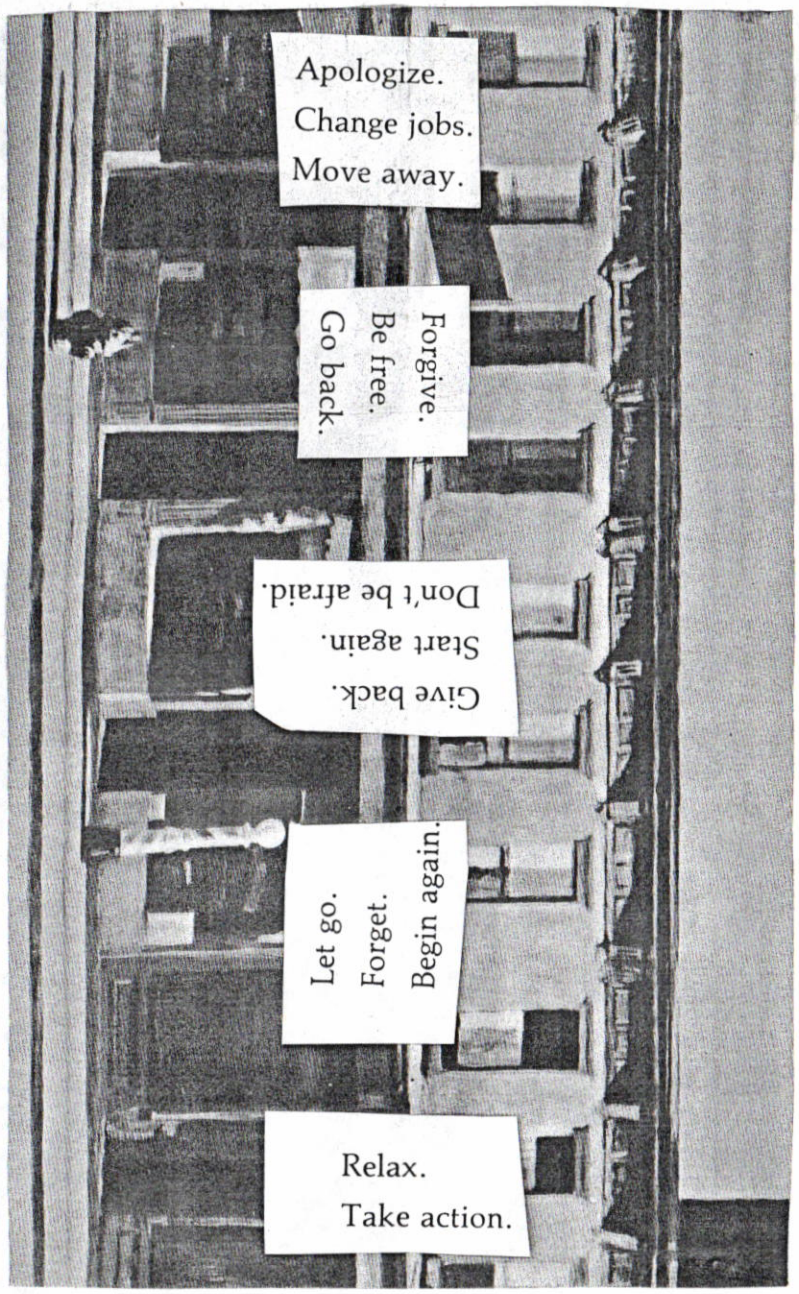
He came over, hard core crap blaring from the car. We could not see him from the couch until the gate swung open and stuck in the mud. He knew to pull it out.
"Just to stop in," he always said.
He spoiled us with drugs. We always wondered why.
I pissed and got more beer.
She rolled another joint from his bag.

We wasted away, and I crawled upstairs, music sprung through the floor...
"You're no rock and roll fun like a party that's over before its begun."

My futon seemed so high, teetering on stacked cinder blocks.
I wished for a real bed.
My big boots got stuck on.

He took them off, I didn't know how he got into the room.
I guess he used my door.
He crawled up long side of me.
He move on top of me.
He moved in.

I began to cry like the snot bubbling lost kid that no one really wants to help.
"You're no rock and roll fun..."
I got lost somewhere in the song, the melody, which ripped away my screams,
until I disappeared.



DC WASHINGTON INTERNATIONAL HOSTEL

We are on the sixth floor, how we scored this available space I will never know but the hostel is just amazing. There are ten bunks in our room. I know Scott is still awake, my dad however is snoring. It was a nerve racking few hours in the city- the conflicts of traveling- At first I had forgotten the city and the public transportation, but it soon came back to me. The sky outside is filled with strobe lights coming from party after party, the town is alive and so are the police, secret service seem to be everywhere. I can feel the looks as we walk down the street, they seem to know why we are here, I make it a point to be extra jovial and excited. Even the night before as we walked down the street other protester's nod at us and smile.

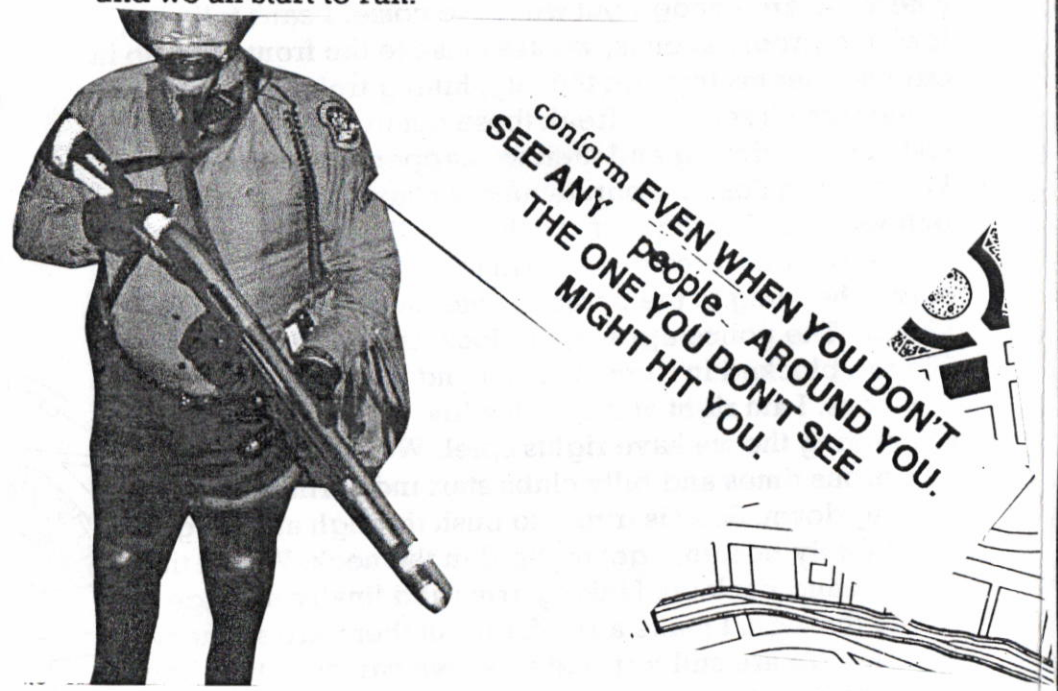
January 20th

An alarm sounds and I am frozen, the room seemed to leak cold air all night. We jump up and move quickly bringing only 1 bag and off to the metro. We drop my dad off at the Dupont Circle for the Voters March- they have a permit and are 'moderate'. Scott and I circle back and hit the streets, finally, meeting at Franklin Park where hundreds of people almost all dressed in black mill around. People joke a lot, the familiar. We march without a clue as to where we are headed but we make noise. I can't tell how long the progression is, we are close to the front. We go in circles it seems through the city, hitting traffic in some places which seems to freak those out in the cars. We are lost and wandering and then we happen upon the Washington Post, corporate media chants begin and balloons filled with paint are thrown. Newspaper bins get tipped over or thrown- we push forward and round the corner heading to the parade route merely four blocks ahead. The police appear and lock us in and a panic sets. We are blocked in from the front and cannot move anymore. I am right at the police line talking to the cops, attempting the we have rights spiel. We get pushed numerous times and billy clubs start indiscriminately raining down. Scott is trying to push through and he gets completely beaten, I get hit hard in the neck. We hit the ground and back up. Linking arms and finally manage to break through. I make a run for it but there are so many people. We are still trapped so all we can do is turn back. Up and down this street.

sides with a building to our back. We are at a street corner attempting to cross and walk sign flashes and the police still stand in the way. They keep telling the crowd to get on the sidewalk, get on the sidewalk. I don't budge. I am only one step in the street but it is the only power that I have. We surge forward and every walk sign and we get hit, pushed. We try again. An officer tells me that maybe the lady should step back. Everyone on the front line erupts yelling, fighting. We push again forward and the billy club is at my neck, digging into my chin. We just want to cross this fucking street and the police start swinging. I get punching directly by a cop in the left eye. I hit the cold wet street face down hard and bodies pile on top of me. I go limp and entirely inside of my mind. I am picked up from above and an officer throws me back to the sidewalk. My eye is swollen shut and I can not open it. I am at least back on the line. A protester medic pulls me back into the crowd. I have lost my brother. The media swarm around me snapping pictures.

10 minutes later.

Someone is striking the police with a metal pole from the top of a light pole, farther up a protester is waving a black flag. A rumor of tear gas spreads quickly and we all start to run.







WHEN YOU ARE detached
DECISIONS ARE SLOWER
AND HARDER TO MAKE.

its as if the wanting to escape is an even greater illusion. the world is smaller than the ink flowing tip of this pen. we seem to be fading, slowly toiling away at our own demise as golden arches keep foiling our escape

Farther From the Packaged Sun.

The curtain is billowing, yet the windows are both locked tight.
Fingers are trailing through the yellow frayed butterfly fabric from the outside,
where it is frigid.
I don't want to move,
so I settle into the crevice that my body has created.
The cats hustle in.
They break down my door.

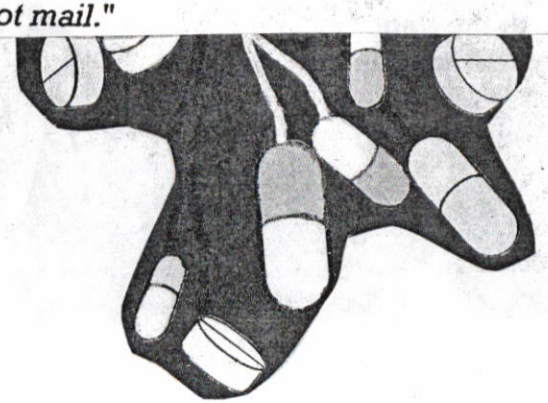
These furry balls fight constantly.
Until they are found basking on the faux middle eastern print carpet,
in some odd fraternal harmony, in the warmth of the patterned sun.
It filters in so rigidly defined in tight glowing lines.

I just want to lay, in the crevice of my body,
snuggled up along side
a lunch pail and a coat.
Away from the packaged sun
and sneer at the fingers
as they try to find me now.



Stairs Crammed Between Two Flights

The concrete fakes marble; stairs resonate the slaps
of my bare feet.
The mail has arrived.
Its been there for days.
I finally make the trek, down to the row of boxes.
Boxes that remind me,
I am surrounded by strangers.
He is a stranger too, yet every night as I sleep he is
clicking away messages,
my lullaby. "*Checks*," I imagine he whispers, posing as an
orderly pushing open the cracked door.
"*Checks*," no, I have not yet escaped.
He looks at me now with a hesitation; he imagines that I
could explode.
Prescription amphetamines were once widely
administered to housewives.
They would vacuum the carpet in places bare.
I can't vacuum now.
The mail is just bills.
Late bills, tacked onto the new ones,
dollar amount on the wattage of life this apartment, 2 East
consumes.
"*Byron*," I say stepping from cold concrete faking marble
to the scratchy
wood floors,
"*We've got mail.*"



4:30 pm
Byron Case
Jackson County Detention Center
1300 Cherry Street
Kansas City, Mo.
64106-2828

<- this is the real address so write him a mail stuff if you want to.

Dear Byron,

I cannot comprehend the situation, the space in which you now by force are residing. I sit at the computer in your old bedroom not knowing what to say, just knowing that I want you to know a few simple things.

First and foremost is that I am willing and want to help in every way possible. I still care about your well being, your happiness.

I received a phone call from Faye, she told me what little she knew. I have tried everyday to get the correct information. For at least a week I checked monochromatic daily waiting for a new diary entry, something to prove that this has not actually occurred. Finally Kristina at least told me what she knew and gave me this address.

I just wish like last summer I could call up my mommy at 3:00 in the morning and have her wire money to get your ass out. It's not that simple this time is it?

My father said, when I told him the situation, that its the most creative intelligent individuals that are the most persecuted in the end. He might actually know what he is talking about this time.

Its my birthday today, last summer on my birthday, do you remember that night... its so different this year. I am finally twenty one, isn't that funny. I can finally legally drink. I am having a big party tomorrow night. It should be crazy. I am always a bit nutty in the summer, you know sleeping with the neighbors, awake until dawn.

Do you sleep a lot now? Can you read books? Can I send you books, or magazines, or anything? Is your mommy doing better?

Byron, I don't know truly what to say, or feel right now. I sincerely hope and must believe that the truth will come out and that this nightmare will end. I will do what ever is beneficial towards that end.
Please stay strong and write back especially if you need anything at all.
Solidarity and Love,
Jamie Smith

arrested: double homicide...